



The County Observer

Roanoke County Police Department Crime Prevention Newsletter

Educating Youth About Inhalants

THEY ARE AMONG THE FIRST SUBSTANCES ABUSED BY CHILDREN AND THE THIRD MOST POPULAR DRUG AMONG PRETEENS.

They are purchased at the local grocery or hardware store, not in a back alley or on a dark street corner. Stored in colorful cans, tubes, bottles, jugs, tanks, and other dispensers, they often sit on utility shelves, under the kitchen sink, in garages and school art rooms for years-ready for the everyday uses that they were designated for.

But for some people-most often young people-these ordinary household products serve another, darker purpose. When their fumes and gases are inhaled by snorting, huffing, or sniffing, the user gets a quick rush or high, and the results can be deadly. More than 1,000 common products can be abused as inhalants, including glue and adhesives, nail polish remover, typewriter correction fluid, propane gas, paints, household cleaners, cooking sprays, and deodorants.

In 2000, more than 2 million youth ages 12 to 17 reported using inhalants at least once in their lifetime. Inhalants are the fourth most abused substances among high school students after alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana. Although no one knows exactly how many adolescents and young people die each year from inhalant abuse, Sudden Sniffing

Death Syndrome can occur the first, tenth, or hundredth time someone uses an inhalant. Inhalant users can suffer such injuries as permanent brain damage, loss of muscle control, and destruction of the heart, blood, kidney, liver, and bone marrow. Treatment is difficult due to the user's addiction, cognitive impairment, and high relapse rate.

Prevention through education is the best approach to inhalant abuse. Although inhalants are poisons rather than drugs, standard drug abuse prevention techniques such as helping youth to develop good self-esteem, learn ways to resist peer pressure, and learn about the dangers of abuse are effective here, too. Young people need to know that sniffing inhalants can kill or hurt them, but they should be educated in an age-appropriate manner and not given details on "how to use" or trendy products being abused. Educating the adults who care for children so they can recognize early warning signs and find appropriate treatment is also very important.

National Inhalants and Poisons Awareness Week, sponsored by the National Inhalant Prevention Coalition (NIPC), takes place in March. It is designed to increase understanding about the use and risks of inhalant involvement. In addition to leading the week long education and awareness campaign, NIPC serves as an inhalant referral and information clearinghouse, stimulates media

coverage about inhalant issues, develops informational materials including a quarterly newsletter, and provides training and technical assistance.

For more information contact: Harvey Weiss, Executive Director of the National Inhalant Prevention Coalition- 2904 Kerbey Lane, Austin, TX 78703. Telephone: 1-800-269-4237 or 1-512-480-8953.

Editor's Note: From the National Crime Prevention Council-Monthly Action Kit.

BURGLARIES

The following burglaries occurred during the month of February.

District one had one residential burglary in the 6500 block of Thirlane Road, one residential burglary in the 7600 block of Barrens Road, and one business burglary in the 5500 block of Green Ridge Road.

District two had no reported burglaries.

District three had one residential burglary in the 4600 block of Brookridge Road.

District four had one residential burglary in the 3700 block of Meadowlark Road, and one business burglary in the 5000 block of Benois Road.

District five had one residential burglary in the 4300 block of Garst

Mill Road, one residential burglary in the 4300 block of Fontaine Circle, one residential burglary in the 3800 block of Anteitam Drive, one business burglary in the 3200 block of Electric Road, and one business burglary in the 4200 block of Garst Mill Road.

District six had one residential burglary in the 8500 block of Bent Mountain Road.

District seven had one business burglary in the 1500 block of Red Lane Extension, one business burglary in the 4000 block of West Main Street, and one business burglary in the 5900 block of West Main Street.

District eight had one residential burglary in the 4800 block of Ramey Lane.

PROJECT CHILD SAFE

The Roanoke County Police Department is participating in Project Child Safe which is a nationwide program to help ensure safe and responsible firearms ownership and storage. It was developed by the National Shooting Sports Foundation and is supported by a U.S. Department of Justice Grant.

The goal of Project Child Safe is to inform and educate all firearms owners on key safety issues and to provide firearms safety kits that include a gun locking device.

The gun locking device distributed in the Project Child Safe program is a cable-style gun lock. Cable locks require that many types of firearms be unlocked before the cable lock is installed, thus providing an extra level of safety.

If you have any questions or wish to receive a free gun lock for your firearm, please contact the Roanoke County Police Crime Prevention Office at 561-8062.